

What is claimed is:

1. An audit-credit-interactive system for interconnecting to a vending machine, said vending machine having a vending machine controller, said audit-credit-interactive system being electrically connected to said vending machine controller comprising:

a microcontroller;

a vending machine interface interconnected with said microcontroller for data communicating with said vending machine controller;

an interactive interface interconnected with said microcontroller for interfacing said audit-credit-interactive system to a computing platform, wherein said computing platform data communicates with said audit-credit-interactive system for the purpose of monitoring and selectively controlling said vending machine.

2. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said vending machine interface is interconnected to at least one of the following: said vending machine controller multi-bus-drop interface (MDB), or said vending machine controller data exchange interface (DEX).

3. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said computing platform is at least one of the following: an online module, a card reader, a cashless payment device, an audit device, a coin mechanism, a bill validator, a personal computer, an online module, a communication module, or a microprocessor based system.

✓  
1 4. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said computing  
2 platform monitors a data communication originating from said audit-credit-interactive  
3 system to determine the operational state of a peripheral device interconnected to said  
4 vending machine controller.

✓  
1 5. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 4, wherein said peripheral  
2 device is at least one of the following: said audit-credit-interactive system, an online  
3 module, a card reader, a cashless payment device, an audit device, a coin mechanism, or a  
4 bill validator.

✓  
1 6. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said audit-  
2 credit-interactive system is at least one of the following: an online module, a card reader, a  
3 cashless payment device, an audit device, a coin mechanism, or a bill validator.

✓  
1 7. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said computing  
2 platform monitors a data communication originating from said audit-credit-interactive  
3 system to determine the message prompts to be displayed to a user.

✓  
1 8. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said interactive  
2 interface is a communication port.

103 ✓  
1 9. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 8, wherein said  
2 communication port is at least one of the following: an RS232 port, an RS485 port, a  
3 serial peripheral interface (SPI) port, or general purpose input output control line port.

✓  
1 10. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 1, further comprising:  
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3 a communication interface interconnected with said microcontroller for  
4 effectuating data communications to a plurality of remote locations.

5 ✓  
1 11. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 10, wherein said  
2 communication interface is at least one of the following: a modem, a wireless modem, a  
3 data link to a communication module, or a transceiver.

4 ✓  
1 12. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 1, further comprising:

2  
3 a network interface interconnected with said microcontroller for  
4 effectuating network data communications.

5 ✓  
1 13. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 12, wherein said network  
2 interface is at least one of the following: an ethernet interface, or a firewire interface.

3 doj  
1 14. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 1, further comprising:

2  
3 a mimic MDB interface interconnected with said microcontroller for data  
4 communicating with a plurality of peripheral devices, said plurality of  
5 peripheral device being interconnected with said mimic MDB interface.

6  
7 15. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 14, wherein said plurality  
8 peripheral devices include at least one of the following: a coin mechanism, a bill  
9 validator, an online module, a communication module, or a card reader.

4 ✓  
5 16. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said audit-  
credit-interactive system is retrofit to said vending machine.

17 An audit-credit-interactive system for interconnection with a vending machine, said vending machine having a vending machine controller, said audit-credit-interactive system being electrically connected to said vending machine controller comprising:

a microcontroller;

a vending machine interface interconnected with said microcontroller for data communicating with said vending machine controller;

a mimic MDB interface interconnected with said microcontroller for data communicating with a plurality of peripheral devices, said plurality of peripheral device being interconnected with said mimic MDB interface.

18. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 17, wherein said vending machine interface is interconnected to at least one of the following: said vending machine controller multi-bus-drop interface (MDB), or said vending machine controller data exchange interface (DEX).

19. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 17, wherein a first plurality of data is communicated between said vending machine controller and said vending machine interface, and a second plurality of data if communicated between said mimic MDB interface and at least one of said plurality of peripheral devices;

wherein, said audit-credit-interactive system effectuates data communication between said vending machine controller and at least one of said plurality of peripherals by way of data processing said first plurality of data and said second plurality of data to provide a

9 [ common communication protocol between said vending machine controller and at least  
10 one of said plurality of peripheral devices.

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1 20. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 17, wherein said audit-  
2 credit-interactive system is a data processing gateway between said vending machine  
3 controller and said plurality of peripheral devices.

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1 21. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 17, wherein said plurality  
2 of peripheral devices is at least one of the following: said audit-credit-interactive system,  
3 an online module, a card reader, a cashless payment device, an audit device, a  
4 communication module, a coin mechanism, or a bill validator.

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1 22. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 17, wherein said audit-  
2 credit-interactive system is at least one of the following: an online module, a card reader, a  
3 cashless payment device, an audit device, a coin mechanism, or a bill validator.

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1 23. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 17, further comprising:

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3 an interactive interface interconnected with said microcontroller for  
4 interconnecting said audit-credit-interactive system to a computing  
5 platform, wherein said computing platform data communicates with said  
6 audit-credit-interactive system for the purpose of monitoring and  
7 selectively controlling said vending machine.

8

9 24. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 23, wherein said  
10 computing platform is at least one of the following: an online module, a card reader, a

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3 cashless payment device, an audit device, a coin mechanism, a bill validator, a personal  
4 computer, an online module, a communication module, or a microprocessor based system.

1 25. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 23, wherein said  
2 computing platform monitors a data communication originating from said audit-credit-  
3 interactive system to determine the operational state of a device interconnected to said  
4 vending machine controller.

1 26. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 17, further comprising:  
2  
3 a communication interface interconnected with said microcontroller for  
4 effectuating data communications to a plurality of remote locations.

1 27. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 26, wherein said  
2 communication interface is at least one of the following: a modem, a wireless modem, a  
3 data link to a communication module, or a transceiver.

1 28. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 17, further comprising:  
2  
3 a network interface interconnected with said microcontroller for  
4 effectuating network data communications.

1 29. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 28, wherein said network  
2 interface is at least one of the following: an ethernet interface, or a firewire interface.

1 30. The audit-credit-interactive system in accordance with claim 17, wherein said audit-  
2 credit-interactive system is retrofit to said vending machine.